

Companions & Homemakers, Inc.  
Testimony Requesting Amendment to RB 467  
Judiciary Committee  
March 23, 2016

Good afternoon Chairman Coleman, Chairman Tong, Senator Kissel, Representative Rebimbas and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Jonathan Hunt, and I am the Director of Communications for Companions & Homemakers, Inc., a non-medical home-care agency serving the elderly population of Connecticut. I am here today to advocate for an amendment to RB 467, 'An Act Concerning Municipal Implementation of Criminal Justice Reforms,' and its application to employers in the home-care industry.

Our clients and their families choose home-care as a means to remain within their own homes and maintain their familiar routines. As a home-care provider, Companions & Homemakers serves a vulnerable population of elderly and disabled individuals who are more susceptible to fraud, abuse and neglect. These settings provide ample opportunity for individuals with less than honest intentions to have access to prescription narcotics and valuables, such as jewelry, cash/checkbooks, etc. Our clients specifically choose our company, and like-agencies within the industry, for the protections offered, including thorough employee screening and the completion of a comprehensive background check on all candidates for employment, as well as bonding for dishonesty, theft and damages. When I inform a client that a comprehensive background check has been performed on the caregiver I am sending into their loved one's home, they would understandably assume I am not sending in someone who has a history of elder abuse or theft. I feel confident in my assumption that no one in this room would contract an agency that knowingly sends an employee with a criminal record of elder abuse to work in their grandmother's home; Or an employee with a history of illegal sale of prescription narcotics to a patient's home where these medications are readily accessible.

Connecticut's General Assembly recognized these vulnerabilities and the need for thorough employee screening in home-care when current law, 20-678 , was enacted over 10 years ago, requiring those seeking employment within the home-care industry to disclose their criminal history in the interest of public safety.

RB 467 is a well-intended bill, however, already allows for exemptions to other professions such as law enforcement, as well as those have access to client funds and personal information. The same exemption should be applied to individuals in a home-care setting where direct oversight is much less, opportunity for abuse and/or fraud is much higher, and the screening process for employment candidacy should be much more thorough. In keeping with currently applied requirements of Connecticut law, employees in the homecare industry should be exempted from the provisions of RB 467.

I thank you for your time.